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ABSTRACT

Participants in sorority and fraternity rush at Miami were surveyed about their experiences with that process, the factors important to the decision to pledge or not to pledge a Greek-letter organization, and the effect rush had on a person's self-image. Another study question was whether there were any differences in personal background characteristics between students who pledged and those who did not. The study group were men and women who participated in rush and pledged a fraternity or sorority and those who participated in rush but did not pledge. Students who did not pledge either withdrew voluntarily or were not preferred by sororities or fraternities. Anonymous questionnaires were administered after the formal rush period. A greater percentage of students of both sexes who pledged agreed that rush was a worthwhile addition to their college experience, felt comfortable in "being themselves" during rush, and believed that the activities of rush period provided them with sufficient information for making a choice about pledging. The milieu of the fraternal system and the people in it were the dominant influences on the decision to pledge. Students who pledged reported that rush had a neutral to positive effect on their views of themselves, while non-pledges indicated that it had a neutral to negative impact. (Author/SW)

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STUDENT LIFE RESEARCH SERVICE

Survey Report

Perceptions of Sorority and Fraternity Rush

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Report Prepared by: Michael J. Keller

The Office of Program Development

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INTRODUCTION

Although the fraternal system has been on the national college scene for almost a century, its appeal to students declined during the 1960s and has only recently begun to make a comeback. Therefore, it is important for the leaders of sororities and fraternities — and the persons who advise them — to be aware of the effectiveness of their recruitment methods and the elements of Greek life which are most and least attractive to individuals who actively seek membership in these organizations. It is also valuable from the standpoint of student development for educators to understand the social and psychological impact which involvement in the Greek selection process has on those who take part. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of participants in sorority and fraternity Rush about their experiences with that process, the factors which were most important in determining an individual's decision either to pledge or not to pledge a Greek-letter organization, and the effect which Rush had on a person's self-image. Also investigated was whether there were any differences between students who pledged and those who did not in terms of certain personal background characteristics; a breakdown of this information by sex is in the Appendix.

Procedure - Four specific groups of undergraduates were sampled for this survey: men and women who participated in Rush at Miami this past academic year and pledged a fraternity or sorority, and those men and women who took part in Rush but did not pledge. Those students who did not pledge were essentially of two types: 1) the voluntary non-pledges — who withdrew from Rush prior to preferencing (the system by which a rushee is matched with a sorority or fraternity) or decided not to pledge, even though he or she was preferenced by at least one of the organizations for which they bid, and 2) the involuntary non-pledges — who were not preferenced by any of the sororities or fraternities for which they bid. Of the non-pledges, 53 percent of the men and 49 percent of the women fell into the latter category.

Alphabetized lists of each group were compiled with the assistance of Mary Evans and Randy Amburgey from the Office of Co-Curricular Programs and the executive officers of the Panhellenic Association and the Interfraternity Council; these individuals also offered many valuable suggestions with respect to the construction of the four similar but separate questionnaires used in the project. Separate numbers between one and four were selected randomly for each group in the study, and every fourth student per group corresponding to the particular number was chosen for the survey. This resulted in samples of 25 percent: 111 women who pledged, 104 women who did not pledge, 104 men who pledged, and 134 men who did not pledge. Because sorority and fraternity Rush is held in the fall and spring semesters respectively, it was necessary to conduct the data collection for this study at two different times during the year. Interviewers from the Student Life Research Service individually administered the appropriate questionnaire to sorority rushees from November 7 to 21, 1977 and to fraternity rushees from March 1 to 15, 1978; in both cases, the surveys were conducted soon

after the completion of the formal Rush period. The anonymity of responses to the questionnaires was guaranteed. Usable returns were obtained from 96 of the women who pledged a sorority for a response rate of 86 percent, from 87 of the women who did not pledge (84 percent), from 90 of the men who pledged a fraternity (87 percent), and from 114 of the men who did not (85 percent). Computer processing for this project was performed by Tucker Barnhart of Administrative Data Processing.

I. PERCEPTIONS OF THE RUSH PROCESS

All of the survey participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with several statements relating to their experience with and reaction to the Rush process. A chi square test was employed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the responses of rushees who eventually pledged and their counterparts who did not (women were compared with women and men with men). The standard .05 level of significance was selected.

Table 1. Perception of the Sorority Rush Experience by Participants Who Pledged and Those Who Did Not

Item	Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	X^2
The activities of the Rush period provided me with sufficient information for making a decision whether to pledge a sorority	Pledged	6%	24%	55%	15%	14.63**
	Didn't Pledge	12	46	37	6	
The ideas I had about the sorority system prior to Rush were basically confirmed by what I learned during Rush	Pledged	10%	46%	35%	9%	
	Didn't Pledge	12	37	47	5	
I felt comfortable in "being myself" and presenting my real personality during the Rush period	Pledged	16%	32%	38%	14%	27.27***
	Didn't Pledge	49	29	17	5	
Rush was a worthwhile addition to my college experience to date	Pledged	5%	11%	39%	44%	14.21**
	Didn't Pledge	9	16	57	17	

** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Table 2. Perception of Fraternity Rush Experience by Participants Who Pledged and Those Who Did Not

Item	Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	X^2
The activities of the Rush period provided me with sufficient information for making a decision whether to pledge a fraternity	Pledged	7%	20%	58%	16%	10.62*
	Didn't Pledge	10	38	44	8	
The ideas I had about the fraternity system prior to Rush were basically confirmed by what I learned during Rush	Pledged	6%	25%	56%	12%	
	Didn't Pledge	11	31	48	11	
I felt comfortable in "being myself" and presenting my real personality during the Rush period	Pledged	4%	30%	49%	17%	18.36***
	Didn't Pledge	19	40	36	5	
Rush was a worthwhile addition to my college experience to date	Pledged	6%	10%	44%	40%	16.62***
	Didn't Pledge	14	13	57	16	

* $p < .05$
*** $p < .001$

As one might expect, a much greater proportion of the students who pledged — both men and women — strongly agreed that Rush was a worthwhile addition to their college experience, felt comfortable in "being themselves" during Rush, and believed that the activities of the Rush period provided them with sufficient information for making a decision with regard to pledging. Although a large majority of each of the four groups of participants considered Rush as beneficial, those individuals who pledged were the more intense in their feelings. A solid majority of students of both sexes who did not pledge indicated that they felt uneasy in exhibiting their true personality during Rush. This was especially true, however, among female non-pledges — almost half of whom strongly disagreed with the statement, "I felt comfortable in 'being myself' and presenting my real personality during the Rush period." Indeed, nearly half of those women who ultimately did pledge a sorority also disagreed with this item. This finding clearly demonstrates that there are dimensions of fraternity and sorority Rush which inhibit many participants, particularly women, from being themselves.

Although there were only slight differences between rushees who did and did not pledge in terms of the degree to which their pre-conceived views of the fraternal system were justified, there was one interesting difference between the sexes on this point. Whereas more than two-thirds of the men who pledged indicated that their prior ideas about Greek life were confirmed by Rush, the reverse was true for a majority of the women who pledged. Hence, most of the women who pledged did so in spite of the fact that the sorority system was not what they had anticipated. With one exception, there were no important differences between voluntary and involuntary non-pledges on these items. A strong majority (62%) of those men who chose not to pledge a fraternity indicated that Rush activities did not give them adequate information for making a decision on whether to join; in contrast, most of the persons who did not receive a bid (64%) felt that they did receive sufficient information. Hence, if one removes the involuntary non-pledges, the differences between the men who pledged and those who did not on their own volition becomes even greater on the informational factor.

II. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PLEDGING DECISION

Rushees who ultimately pledged a fraternity or sorority, or those who voluntarily chose not to pledge, were asked to indicate how important a variety of factors were in determining their decision. Tables 3 and 4 contain a breakdown, in the order of the mean score, of the responses of women and men who eventually pledged a Greek-letter organization. The items on each list are not exactly identical, given the natural differences between the interests of men and women and the way in which fraternities and sororities operate at Miami.

Table 3. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision to Pledge a Sorority

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Personal compatibility with particular sorority	0	1	4	95	3.94
Personalities of actives	2	1	0	97	3.92
Opportunity to meet people and make close friendships	2	1	6	91	3.85
Promise of an active social life	2	15	43	41	3.22
Opportunity for future connections and contacts	9	19	38	34	2.97
Opportunity for leadership	12	16	45	28	2.90
Chance to meet members of the opposite sex	6	23	50	21	2.85
Image or reputation of particular sorority	15	18	42	26	2.79
Need for companionship	13	22	41	25	2.78
Emphasis on scholastic achievement	15	24	42	19	2.68
Opportunity to participate in service projects	12	23	52	14	2.68
Impressive Rush parties	14	18	58	10	2.66
Personalities of fellow rushees	19	30	32	19	2.51
Personality of Rush Chairman	22	37	27	15	2.34
Privilege of belonging to an exclusive group	24	37	32	7	2.23
Opportunity to have an impact on campus decision-making	29	29	32	9	2.22
Opportunity for academic help	28	35	29	7	2.16
Reasonable cost of belonging to particular sorority	36	28	21	15	2.15

Table 3 cont. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision to Pledge a Sorority

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Chance to belong to alumni group	31	38	26	5	2.05
Inadequacy of residence hall activities	38	30	27	5	2.00
Opportunity to promote change within the university	36	33	28	3	1.99
Family expectations	44	25	21	10	1.98
Opportunity to be among the "in-crowd" on campus	40	33	22	5	1.93
Number of friends who are Greek	40	34	21	5	1.92
Attractiveness of sorority suite	32	46	22	0	1.90

Table 4. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision to Pledge a Fraternity

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Personalities of actives	2	3	7	88	3.80
Personal compatibility with particular fraternity	5	7	9	80	3.64
Opportunity to meet people and make close friendships	6	6	16	73	3.56
Promise of an active social life	6	16	39	40	3.13
Chance to meet members of the opposite sex	4	22	41	32	3.01
Opportunity to participate in athletic activities	10	18	43	29	2.91
Fewer rules and regulations than in residence halls	13	20	30	36	2.90
Access to better housing accommodations	13	23	33	30	2.80
Image or reputation of a particular fraternity	18	14	40	28	2.78
Personalities of fellow rushees	13	21	40	26	2.78
Opportunity for leadership	12	24	47	17	2.68
Access to better meals	14	28	38	20	2.63
Inadequacy of residence hall activities	23	20	32	24	2.58
Reasonable cost of belonging to particular fraternity	18	27	40	16	2.53
Need for companionship	19	28	36	18	2.52
Emphasis on scholastic achievement	21	27	32	20	2.51
Opportunity for future connections and contacts	23	28	28	21	2.47
Physical attractiveness of fraternity house	13	37	41	9	2.46
Privilege of belonging to an exclusive group	26	33	30	11	2.27

Table 4 cont. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision to Pledge a Fraternity

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Impressive Rush parties	20	44	24	11	2.27
Opportunity to participate in service projects	22	43	28	7	2.19
Opportunity for academic help	30	34	28	8	2.13
Stature of the national fraternity organization	43	24	23	11	2.02
Opportunity to have an impact on campus decision-making	33	38	24	4	2.00
Opportunity to be among the "in-crowd" on campus	40	29	28	3	1.94
Number of friends who are Greek	36	41	20	3	1.91
Opportunity to promote change within the university	42	38	14	6	1.83
Chance to belong to alumni group	52	32	11	4	1.68
Family expectations	63	22	9	6	1.57

The chance to make friends and to associate with compatible people were central to the decision of both men and women to pledge. Nearly all the women and an overwhelming proportion of the men rated three factors — personality of actives, compatibility with a particular Greek organization, and the opportunity to meet people and make close friendships — as very important determinants of their decision to pledge. The promise of an active social life and the chance to meet members of the opposite sex were very important considerations for many students, as was the reputation of the particular sorority or fraternity. The opportunity for future contacts and connections, for leadership, and for companionship were key factors in the decision of women. Athletic activities, better housing accommodations, the prospect of fewer rules and regulations, and the personality of fellow rushees were particularly strong inducements for men.

There were noticeable differences between fraternity and sorority pledges in terms of the importance they placed on certain items. The personalities of rushees, the perceived inadequacy of residence hall activities, and the believed reasonableness of the cost of belonging to a Greek organization had a greater effect on the pledging decision of men than women. In addition, the attractiveness of fraternity houses was a more important feature to men than the appearance of sorority suites were to women — although it is not possible to compare the two types of facilities. Sorority pledges were more strongly influenced than their

fraternity counterparts by the opportunity to make future contacts, to belong to an alumni group, to participate in service projects, to exercise leadership, and to have an impact on campus decision-making. Women also were more strongly moved than were men by the need for companionship, the impressiveness of Rush parties, and family expectations. Further evidence that the family has greater impact on the making of a sorority woman than a fraternity man was provided by another question on the survey. Respondents were asked to indicate, from a list of individuals, which was most influential in motivating them to participate in Rush. The highest percentage of women, excluding those who maintained that their decision to rush was entirely self-motivated, picked their parents (27%), with college friends second (24%). In sharp contrast, the number of men who chose their friends in college as the greatest source of influence (45%) far outdistanced those who picked their parents (10%). These findings closely approximate the corresponding ones for men and women who did not pledge.

Students who participated in Rush, but eventually chose not to pledge (or withdrew early in the process), also were asked to indicate how important a variety of factors were in determining their decisions. Only rushees who voluntarily declined to pledge were asked to respond to the items in Tables 5 and 6; persons who were not preferenced by any of the fraternities or sororities for which they bid, did not complete this section of the survey.

Table 5. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision Not to Pledge a Sorority

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Attitudes and behavior of actives	6	8	45	41	3.22
Artificial and superficial quality of Greek life	10	14	33	43	3.10
Sorority exclusiveness and snobbery	14	14	24	49	3.08
Ability to make many friends without belonging to a sorority	16	14	35	35	2.90
Too much "Mickey Mouse" in the Rush process	20	20	29	31	2.73
Failure to receive invitations to parties by sororities of my choice	33	8	14	45	2.71
Distaste for Rush parties	24	12	35	29	2.71
Incompatibility of personality with the Greek image	28	14	31	28	2.59
Personalities of fellow rushees	29	20	24	28	2.49

Table 5 cont. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision Not to Pledge a Sorority

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Desire not to become wedded socially to one particular group	24	28	26	24	2.49
Insufficient time to make choice among sororities	24	31	24	22	2.43
Discourteous treatment during Rush	33	27	17	23	2.31
Dislike of rules governing the Rush process	31	29	28	12	2.20
Insufficient benefits compared to costs	33	29	26	12	2.16
Adequacy of residence hall activities	41	22	26	10	2.10
Failure to obtain a matching bid from first preferenced sorority	51	13	17	19	2.04
Inability to afford the costs of belonging to a sorority	53	16	22	10	1.88
Anti-intellectual atmosphere in sororities	45	29	22	4	1.84
Poor image or reputation of Greek organizations on campus	51	26	14	10	1.82
Lack of separate sorority housing	55	22	16	8	1.77
Impact of pledging on grade average	56	19	19	6	1.75
Personality of Rush chairmen	57	18	22	4	1.73
Religious, racial or ethnic biases of sororities	75	8	14	4	1.47
Pressure from close friends or family members not to pledge	82	6	10	2	1.31
Inability to meet required grade average for pledging desired sorority	78	14	6	2	1.31

Table 6. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision Not to Pledge a Fraternity

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Attitudes and behavior of actives	25	10	26	39	2.80
Ability to make many friends without belonging to a fraternity	22	20	31	27	2.63
Fraternity exclusiveness and snobbery	22	27	22	30	2.60
Desire not to become wedded socially to one particular group	30	18	25	28	2.51
Incompatibility of personality with the Greek image	28	23	20	30	2.51
Artificial and superficial quality of Greek life	26	20	33	21	2.49
Too much "Mickey Mouse" in the Rush process	25	31	19	25	2.44
Personalities of fellow rushees	30	20	31	20	2.41
Insufficient time to make choice among fraternities	26	33	21	19	2.33
Impact of pledging on grade average	33	19	30	18	2.32
Discourteous treatment during Rush	39	28	12	21	2.16
Failure to receive invitations to Rush parties by fraternities of my choice	44	25	13	18	2.05
Insufficient benefits compared to costs	43	26	16	15	2.03
Dislike of rules governing the Rush process	45	27	22	7	1.90
Anti-intellectual atmosphere in fraternities	49	25	21	5	1.82
Inability to afford the costs of belonging to a fraternity	56	20	15	10	1.79

Table 6 cont. Importance of Factors in Determining Decision Not to Pledge a Fraternity

	Not Important	Of Little Importance	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Mean Score
Adequacy of residence hall activities	54	23	15	8	1.77
Physical unattractiveness of fraternity houses	58	18	15	8	1.73
Distaste for Rush parties	57	23	12	8	1.72
Poor image or reputation of Greek organizations on campus	56	23	16	5	1.71
Religious, racial or ethnic biases of fraternities	57	25	12	7	1.68
Pressure from close friends or family members not to pledge	77	10	7	7	1.43
Inability to meet required grade average for pledging desired fraternity	78	15	3	3	1.32

Dislike of the milieu of the fraternal system, as well as the people in it, were the most widely-shared reasons for not pledging. A large number of non-pledges from both sexes (but particularly women) indicated that the attitude and behavior of actives, the perceived exclusiveness and snobbery of Greek-letter organizations, the believed superficiality and artificiality of Greek life, the incompatibility of their own personalities with the Greek image, and the "Mickey Mouse" of the Rush process were quite important factors in their decision. A heavy majority of both groups of non-pledges also were motivated by their confidence in their ability to make many friends without belonging to a fraternity or sorority. Clearly, however, those men and women who chose not to pledge did so largely because they were "turned off" by what they saw of the Greek system. Indeed, one could make a strong argument, based on the results in Table 7, that the voluntary non-pledges were more disenchanted with and hostile toward the fraternal system as a result of their Rush experience than were those students who were rejected for membership.

Table 7. "Do You Plan To Try To Join a Sorority (Fraternity) at Miami in the Future?"

	Sorority Voluntary Non-Pledges	Sorority Involuntary Non-Pledges	Fraternity Voluntary Non-Pledges	Fraternity Involuntary Non-Pledges
Yes, definitely	0%	7%	4%	22%
Yes, probably	24	37	25	38
No, probably	19	20	38	31
No, definitely	57	37	33	9

A sharply higher percentage of those students who were refused a bid by fraternities and sororities maintained interest in joining a Greek-letter organization at Miami in the future. Less than a fourth of the women, and a third of the men, who turned down bids indicated that they might attempt to join a fraternity or sorority in the future.

Although more than 40 percent of the respondents of both sexes felt that insufficient time to make a choice among particular chapters was at least somewhat important in their decision not to pledge, men and women differed when asked specifically about the length of this year's Rush schedule. An outright majority (53%) of the sorority rushees thought that the schedule was too short for the number of activities held, while only 22 percent of the fraternity hopefuls felt that the Rush period should be longer than the current two-week period.

Satisfaction with residence hall activities and distaste for the Rush parties they experienced were cited by more women than men as an important reason for their refusal to pledge. A far greater number of fraternity than sorority rushees, on the other hand, seemed influenced by the possible negative impact of pledging on their grade averages. The finding with respect to residence hall activities was consistent with the responses of students who had pledged —— that is, more men than women indicated that the inadequacy of residence hall activities was a key factor in their decision to pledge, and a greater number of women who declined to pledge stressed their happiness with the quality of hall programs.

III. IMPACT OF RUSH EXPERIENCE ON STUDENTS' SELF IMAGES

As with many other aspects of a student's college experience, participation in Rush contains the possibility of disappointment and rejection. A rushee may find Greek life not to his or her liking, may resent the close social scrutiny candidates are sometimes expected to undergo, may fail to obtain a bid from the

particular sorority or fraternity desired, or may not be invited to join any organization at all. It is reasonable to expect that, as the result of this process, some students may suffer bruised egos and lower estimations of self-esteem. For this reason, it is important for staff members whose jobs involve counseling undergraduates to be aware of the possible psychological impact of Rush and the number of Rush participants likely to be affected.

To obtain an idea of the consequences which Rush has on students' perceptions of themselves, both pledges and non-pledges were asked to indicate whether their experience in this process strengthened, weakened or had no effect on their self-images, in terms of specific personal characteristics. The findings for both men and women demonstrate that there were sharp differences between the two groups of rushees. Consistently, those students who pledged a sorority or fraternity reported that Rush had a neutral to positive effect on their view of themselves, while non-pledges indicated that it had a neutral to negative impact.

Table 8. Effect Which the Sorority Rush Experience Had On the Self-Image of Pledges and Non Pledges, With Respect to Certain Personal Traits

Item	Respondent	Weakened Your Self-Image	Had No Effect On Your Self-Image	Strengthened Your Self-Image	X^2
Your ability to express yourself verbally	Pledged	9%	25%	66%	30.25***
	Didn't Pledge	27	49	24	
The attractiveness of your personality	Pledged	12%	31%	57%	38.50***
	Didn't Pledge	48	33	18	
Your intellectual qualities	Pledged	7%	64%	29%	8.49*
	Didn't Pledge	3	83	14	
Your ability to make a good impression in a social situation	Pledged	14%	25%	61%	42.72***
	Didn't Pledge	52	30	17	
Your personal appearance	Pledged	14%	56%	30%	11.48**
	Didn't Pledge	35	47	19	

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$

Table 9. Effect Which the Fraternity Rush Experience Had On the Self-Image of Pledges and Non Pledges, With Respect to Certain Personal Traits

Item	Respondent	Weakened Your Self-Image	Had No Effect On Your Self-Image	Strengthened Your Self-Image	X^2
Your ability to express yourself verbally	Pledged	7%	43%	50%	11.54**
	Didn't Pledge	17	54	29	
The attractiveness of your personality	Pledged	8%	47%	46%	19.36***
	Didn't Pledge	24	55	21	
Your intellectual qualities	Pledged	4%	78%	18%	3.42
	Didn't Pledge	11	69	19	
Your ability to make a good impression in a social situation	Pledged	7%	34%	59%	27.30***
	Didn't Pledge	31	41	28	
Your personal appearance	Pledged	6%	66%	29%	10.94**
	Didn't Pledge	11	77	11	

**$p < .01$
***$p < .001$

The distinction between pledges and non-pledges of both sexes was especially great on two items (attractiveness of personality and ability to make a good impression in a social situation), and between sorority pledges and non-pledges alone on one trait —— ability of verbal expression. There also was greater disparity between the responses of the two groups of women to the items in this section than there was between men. Sorority non-pledges were more prone than were their fraternity counterparts to perceive Rush as having weakened their confidence in the attractiveness of their personality, their ability to make a good impression in a social situation, the ability to express themselves verbally, and their personal appearance, while sorority pledges were more likely to view the Rush experience as having strengthened their self-image on the first two of these traits. The factor on which there was the smallest degree of difference between pledges and non-pledges was the extent to which students' conceptions of their intellectual ability were affected by participation in Rush. A large majority of all respondents indicated that Rush had little impact on their faith in their

intellectual powers (although a higher percentage of sorority than fraternity pledges believed that their self perceptions with respect to this characteristic were strengthened as a result of their experience).

One might expect that Rush would have a more negative impact on the self-images of students who had not been preferenced by any fraternity or sorority than those who chose not to join. However, there was a clear difference between the responses of the two sets of rushees on only one trait: a greater percentage of men and women who were turned down for membership in a Greek-letter organization (61% and 34% respectively) indicated that Rush had weakened their confidence in the attractiveness of their personality. One possible explanation for the high proportion of women whose self-image of their personality suffered as a result of Rush is the timing of the process. Freshmen constitute a large majority of Rush participants, and the experience of rejection in the early weeks of the fall semester (when Sorority Rush is held) may have been particularly shattering for individuals who have not had the chance to widely test their social skills or build up a body of friends at college. A slightly larger proportion of fraternity participants who were denied bids (39%) developed a less positive view of their ability to make a good impression in a social situation as a result of the Rush experience.

IV. CONCLUSION

Rush, with its frenzied two weeks of social activities, serves as a mutual examination process for both Greek-letter organizations and prospective pledges. It exposes students to the benefits and liabilities of "going Greek", and provides each fraternity and sorority with the opportunity to evaluate the compatibility of rushees with its members. That this process helps participants to decide whether or not to affiliate with the fraternal system was demonstrated by the reaction of pledges and non-pledges to the Rush experience and their interaction with Greek actives. Boosters of fraternities and sororities have always maintained that Greek life is not appropriate for every student, and the responses of the voluntary non-pledges support this thesis. At the same time, Miami's fraternal organizations should be concerned with the number of rushees (including many eventual pledges) who indicated that they felt uncomfortable presenting their real personality during the process. Many students, for the sake of gaining the social advantages and camaraderie associated with the Greek system at this University, apparently felt the necessity of "packaging" themselves in an image congenial to the chapters they wished to impress.

More attention also needs to be focused on the consequences of Rush for students who were not accepted for membership in any fraternity or sorority. In addition to suffering the obvious psychological pain and depression which results from such a rejection, students appear to form a less favorable impression of themselves in terms of certain personal characteristics. Whether this negative self-assessment is a short-term effect or whether it colors a student's remaining social, personal and academic life in college is a subject for future research. But the mere fact that some students are hurt by the Rush process should encourage professionals concerned with student development to explore ways to treat this problem.

APPENDIX: SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PLEDGES AND NON-PLEDGES

The findings of this study produced no evidence that there are striking differences between pledges and non-pledges of both sexes at Miami in terms of their personal and social attributes.

Table 10. Percentage of Pledges and Non Pledges in Specific Demographic Subgroups Who Participated in the Survey

	Women Who Pledged	Women Who Did Not Pledge	Men Who Pledged	Men Who Did Not Pledge
ACADEMIC DIVISION				
Arts & Sciences - Humanities	17%	20%	8%	9%
Arts & Sciences - Social Science	16	22	18	19
Arts & Sciences - Natural Science	16	14	17	22
Business	21	23	44	34
Education	21	14	2	4
Applied Science	5	1	8	7
Fine Arts	5	7	1	5
Western College	0	0	1	0
CLASS RANK				
Freshman	74%	70%	83%	90%
Other	26	30	17	10
FAMILY MEMBERS AFFILIATED WITH FRATERNITY OR SORORITY				
None	32%	27%	34%	47%
One	25	34	27	28
Two	23	28	26	14
More than two	20	11	13	11
PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL LEVEL				
Non-high school graduate	0%	1%	2%	2%
High school graduate	5	6	5	8
Some college	12	13	9	14
Baccalaureate degree	34	43	39	40
Master's degree	25	27	31	26
Ph.D. or professional degree	24	11	15	11
PARENTAL INCOME				
Less than $10,000	1%	3%	1%	2%
$10,000 to $19,999	13	15	14	12
$20,000 to $29,999	22	34	28	34
$30,000 or more	65	48	57	52

Table 10 cont. Percentage of Pledges and Non Pledges in Specific Demographic Subgroups Who Participated in the Survey

	Women Who Pledged	Women Who Did Not Pledge	Men Who Pledged	Men Who Did Not Pledge
POLITICAL VIEWS				
Very conservative	3%	1%	5%	1%
Conservative	27	39	34	27
Middle-of-the-road	44	42	41	42
Liberal	25	17	11	25
Very liberal	1	1	11	5
RELIGIOUS FAITH				
Protestant	59%	62%	43%	44%
Roman Catholic	28	28	23	36
Jewish	3	2	12	5
Other	4	5	13	10
None	6	2	9	6

Using parental income and educational level as indicators, it appears as though the socio-economic standing of the families of sorority and fraternity pledges was slightly greater than that of non-pledges (particularly in the case of female students); it must be noted, however, that the relationship between pledges and non-pledges of both sexes on each of the two demographic characteristics was not statistically significant. On balance, fraternity pledges described themselves as more politically conservative than did men who did not join a fraternity ($x^2 = 11.04$, $p < .05$); in contrast, sorority pledges considered themselves as slightly more liberal than did non-pledges. Although there was no statistically significant difference between rushees in terms of the number of members of their immediate families who belonged to a social sorority or fraternity, slightly more pledges than non-pledges came from families in which at least two persons were affiliated with a Greek-letter organization. The difference was especially great in the case of men.

This report is a condensation and interpretation of the complete set of data that resulted from the survey. For additional information about the survey contact Michael Keller, Coordinator of the Student Life Research Service, at 213 Warfield Hall or 529-3931.